

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing a solution of a polysaccharide or polysaccharide ether having a viscosity of 1,000 mPa.s or less comprising adding to an aqueous medium a polysaccharide or polysaccharide ether and an alkaline depolymerization agent, characterized in that the polysaccharide or polysaccharide ether and the alkaline depolymerization agent are added simultaneously to the aqueous medium.
2. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, characterized in that a solid composition comprising the polysaccharide or polysaccharide ether and the alkaline depolymerization agent is added to the aqueous medium.
3. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~any one of claims 1-2~~ claim 1, characterized in that the alkaline depolymerization agent is selected from the group consisting of sodium percarbonate, sodium perborate, carbamide peroxide in combination with a base, sodium persulfate in combination with a base, 3-chloroperoxybenzoic acid (m-CPBA) in combination with a base, and mixtures thereof.
4. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~any one of claims 1-3~~ claim 1, characterized in that the base is sodium hydroxide or sodium carbonate.
5. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 3, characterized in that the alkaline depolymerization agent is sodium percarbonate, sodium perborate or sodium persulfate in combination with a base.
6. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~any one of claims 1-5~~ claim 1, characterized in that the polysaccharide ether is selected from the group consisting of carboxymethyl cellulose, hydrophobically modified carboxymethyl cellulose, hydroxyethyl

cellulose, hydrophobically modified hydroxyethyl cellulose, ethyl hydroxyethyl cellulose, and hydrophobically modified ethyl hydroxyethyl cellulose.

7. . (Previously Presented) A solid composition comprising a polysaccharide ether and an alkaline depolymerization agent characterized in that the alkaline depolymerization agent is selected from the group consisting of sodium percarbonate, carbamide peroxide in combination with a base, sodium persulfate in combination with a base, 3-chloroperoxybenzoic acid (m-CPBA) in combination with a base, and mixtures thereof.

8. . (Previously Presented) A composition according to claim 7, characterized in that the depolymerization agent is sodium percarbonate, or sodium persulfate in combination with a base.

9. . (Currently Amended) A composition according to ~~any one of claims 7-8~~ claim 7, characterized in that the polysaccharide ether is selected from the group consisting of carboxymethyl cellulose, hydrophobically modified carboxymethyl cellulose, hydroxyethyl cellulose, hydrophobically modified hydroxyethyl cellulose, ethyl hydroxyethyl cellulose, and hydrophobically modified ethyl hydroxyethyl cellulose.

10. . (Currently Amended) A composition according to ~~any one of claims 7-9~~ claim 7 comprising carboxymethyl cellulose and sodium percarbonate.

11. . (Currently Amended) A composition according to ~~any one of claims 8-10~~ claim 8, characterized in that the polysaccharide ether is selected from the group consisting of carboxymethyl cellulose, hydrophobically modified carboxymethyl cellulose, hydroxyethyl cellulose, hydrophobically modified hydroxyethyl cellulose, ethyl hydroxyethyl cellulose, and hydrophobically modified ethyl hydroxyethyl cellulose.

12. . (Currently Amended) A composition according to ~~any one of claims 8-11~~ claim 8 comprising carboxymethyl cellulose and sodium percarbonate.